

Francis Preston Blair to Andrew Jackson, March 30, 1845, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>FRANCIS P. BLAIR TO JACKSON.

Washington, March 30, 1845.

My Dear General, Your kind letter of the 18th Inst. came to me at a moment that made it peculiarly welcome. When a man finds his honest endeavors to serve another and a great public cause, rewarded with repulse, it is a balm to him to find the great leader who gave it the first triumph and in fact gave the present actors on the scene all their importance, still cherish him with affection and respect. My Dear General the more I know of other men, the more I learn to love you and to estimate the great qualities which make you the man of history for our times. When did motives of policy ever induce you to sacrifice an honest friend, a useful friend, to cold calculations, based on the idea that your enemies were to be propitiated by the disgrace or the blood of the victim?

But I turn from this view which I know cannot be agreeable to you, to speak of the part which duty calls on me to act in the present attitude of things. It is the wish of the President to avail himself of the support of the Globe while he discards the Editor, whom he apprehends will bring his administration into collision with the personal adversaries created in the course of the political conflict: With this view Mr. Ritchie has been called to Washington and a few days since proposed at the instance of the President to buy my press. Mr. Ritchie says he is poor and is evidently anxious to take my position with a view to serve his own as well as the public interests. I told Mr. Ritchie that nothing would be more gratifying to me than to contribute to his prosperity, that so far as regarded money matters, I had nothing to wish for, that I would cheerfully give way to him, were I to consult

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my own feelings, but that like you at a feast I never forget "*my absent friends*," that I had therefore sent Mr. Rives to see Messrs. Wright, Van Buren, etc. to consult as to what I owed to myself and to my public position in this emergency and had written to you, and that whatever you said would be best for the public cause I would do. I expressed myself in the same way to the President who sought an interview, and who told me that he was disposed to treat me very handsomely and satisfy the public that I had not forfeited my standing by any thing derogatory to my character. I have not heard from Albany. Mr. Rives will probably return day after tomorrow. If my friends there think I ought to *fling up* I will do it at once. If you write me to that effect I shall do it with joy.

The truth is I shall be as Editor of the Globe in the most difficult position I ever occupied. With the best disposition to preserve the harmony of the party I fear it would be impossible. If I could conquer my natural pride and banish discontent from my own bosom, every man of our party, every leading aspirant, every section inclined to get up an opposition in our ranks to the course of the Administration would press their griefs on me. Benton, Allen, Cass, Wright, Mr. Van Buren, indeed possibly some of Mr. Polks own cabinet, ere long, would be found upon private as well as public grounds disinclined to go on with an administration, which might be considered too Southern in its aspects in regard to the succession. Under such state of case the Globe would inevitably become warped into an array against the Administration in all likelihood into open war with its organ. To bring upon myself the odium of dividing my party and of drawing down inevitable defeat at the end of four years, is what above all things I would avoid. If therefore in your opinion I can now sound a retreat without dishonor, can give up the Globe without the imputation of deserting my friends, I will yield to the necessity. But if I surrender my press, I will not my pen, which shall ever be devoted to your fame.

most affectionately yours,